

H.R. 2830 will bolster port security and immigration enforcement by establishing an Assistant Commandant for Port and Waterways Security, authorizing additional maritime security teams and by establishing the Waterway Watch Program whereby civilian boaters can notify the Coast Guard of suspicious activity.

The Coast Guard Authorization Act enhances safety standards in one of America's most dangerous occupations—the one portrayed on the popular television series “The Deadliest Catch”—by increasing safety equipment requirements on fishing vessels, requiring training for vessel operations, and by changing the appeals process for suspending and revoking a mariner's license.

The bill also addresses one of the Coast Guard's Integrated Deepwater Systems Program, which has been beleaguered by several well-publicized delays, cost overruns, and problems with the designs of certain replacement assets. The bill increases accountability for the Deepwater Program by addressing systemic contract management problems and establishing a civilian chief acquisition officer reporting directly to the Coast Guard commandant.

H.R. 2830 also requires ships to begin installing water treatment systems to reduce the spread of invasive species in ballast water carried by the ships. These requirements are a step in the right direction because they will protect the waterways of every State and territory of the United States, and the industries and communities that rely upon them, from aquatic invasive species that enter the waters of the United States via the ballast water systems of commercial vessels. The bill also addresses other environmental concerns by requiring double hulls for U.S. ships carrying over 600 cubic meters of oil and providing for implementation of an international agreement on maritime pollution.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation this rule provides for consideration is the product of extensive hearings and consideration by the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Homeland Security Committee and the Judiciary Committee. I commend the chairmen and ranking members of those committees for their commitment to addressing the needs of the Coast Guard and our Nation's maritime security.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend from New York for yielding me the time for this important proposed rule for consideration of H.R. 2830, the Coast Guard Reauthorization Act of 2008.

Unlike my colleague, I rise in opposition to the structured rule, and I would like to quote a colleague whose opinions on these matters I respect to explain why.

On September 15, 2005, my Democrat Rules Committee colleague from Flor-

ida, Congressman ALCEE HASTINGS, correctly stated that the modified open rule under which the Coast Guard was last reauthorized was insufficient in living up to how this House should be run.

While that Republican rule permitted Members who preprinted their amendments in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD to offer those amendments, he noted his disappointment “that the preprinting of amendments was even required. Despite the majority's claim, this legislative process which they call open is actually restricted. It is not an open rule because every Member is not permitted to offer any germane amendment.”

Mr. Speaker, as imperfect and insufficient as that rule may have been to Mr. HASTINGS in 2005 and his minority Democrat colleagues, today's rule pales and fails in comparison—despite the often-repeated Democrat promises to run the most open, honest and ethical House in history.

This rule, which is even more restrictive, makes in order a majority of Democrat amendments and strips every Member with a new, good and germane idea of how to improve this legislation of the ability to come to the floor and even to offer it.

While the Democrats on the Rules Committee may have been following the wishes of their committee chairman by reporting out this rule, they have once again directly contradicted their campaign promises of their own leadership to run an open House of Representatives, instead choosing to become the most closed Congress in history.

Mr. Speaker, while this rule and this standard of recurring policy of closing down the legislative process is bad for the House, the effect of this legislation is even worse for American consumers. It continues the same flawed “no-energy energy policy” that Democrats have followed blindly for the last 17 months.

A provision included in this legislation would essentially shut down the development of new LNG plants which seem counterintuitive given today's energy crisis. Natural gas is one of the most clean-burning fossil fuels, and passing this provision would only further reduce our energy supply while moving us further from energy independence for which Republicans have consistently advocated.

Time and time again this Democrat leadership has consistently promised to deliver a “commonsense” energy plan to reduce the cost of gasoline. However, since my friends on the other side of the aisle have taken control of Congress, the average price of a gallon of gasoline has risen more than a dollar, from \$2.33 in January 2007 to just over \$3.51 this week.

I have supported a number of this Congress's bipartisan efforts to reduce demand—like legislation to increase CAFE standards. But Americans literally cannot afford for Congress to continue to ignore the supply-side

issues and problems associated with this overall issue. Specifically, that this Democrat majority continues to pursue a national energy policy that does absolutely nothing to increase our ability to produce more energy. Without a supply-side response, prices will continue to rise.

It is a fact that enough oil exists in deep waters off America's coasts and in our Federal lands to power 60 million cars for 60 years. Yet these domestic resources remain off-limits to exploration because of the Democrat policies that pervade this House.

In 1995, the Clinton administration vetoed the bill that would have allowed environmentally sound domestic exploration in Alaska. During this debate, opponents of the legislation argued that the benefits would be at least 10 years away and would not be worth it. Well, it is now more than 10 years later and the cost of crude oil has gone from just under \$20 a barrel to nearly \$120 a barrel and we are no closer to energy independence than we were 13 years ago.

Mr. Speaker, I hope for the sake of American consumers, and for the sake of their paychecks, that it does not take this Democrat majority another 10 years to realize that now is the time that we should focus on ways to utilize our own energy resources. It is called energy independence.

For prices to fall, Congress should be considering legislation that increases supply and reduces demand, not legislation like today's, that simply reduces the supply of one of the planet's cleanest fossil fuels.

These are basic commonsense economic principles that should be part of a commonsense plan. I encourage all of my colleagues to recognize that now is the time to stop ignoring our untapped domestic supply. I oppose this rule.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SESSIONS. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. DREIER. I thank my friend for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to compliment my friend from Dallas for his very thoughtful statement. He has made the case that we want to defeat the previous question on this so that any Member, Democrat or Republican alike, would have the opportunity to offer their thoughtful proposals as to how we would deal with this issue of skyrocketing gasoline prices.

I represent Southern California, and I will tell you that it is a major concern of my constituents. And I know my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, as we have seen this dramatic increase take place over the past year plus, year and a half, agree it is very, very troubling.

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And I was struck. I've had the benefit of looking at the advance copy of Mr. SESSIONS' closing remarks. His thoughtful staff has coined actually a